

2 Corinthians 13:10

by St. John Chrysostom

Paul encourages the Corinthians to rejoice, be perfected, be comforted, be of the same mind, live in peace, and to love God and follow His commandments.

Scripture: Genesis 20:6, Deuteronomy 10:12, Matthew 5:3-18, Romans 15:30, 1 Corinthians 1:9, 1 Corinthians 6:11, 1 Corinthians 7:12, 1 Corinthians 12:11, 2 Corinthians 13:11

Topics: "Christian Unity", "Gods Love"

Description

John Chrysostom emphasizes the importance of love, reconciliation, and unity among believers, urging them to rejoice, be perfected, comforted, be of the same mind, and live in peace, knowing that God's love and peace will be with them. He highlights the significance of showing love through deeds, as God Himself demonstrated through His actions of reconciliation and mercy towards us. Chrysostom encourages believers to imitate God's love and to strive for a pure conscience, unity, and peace among each other, knowing that God delights in these virtues and that they lead to salvation and blessings.

Transcript

For this cause I write these things while absent, that I may not when present deal sharply, according to the authority which the Lord gave me for building up, and not for casting down.

He was sensible he had spoken more vehemently than his wont, and especially towards the end of the Epistle. For he said before, Now I Paul myself entreat you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ; I who in your presence am lowly among you, but being absent am of good courage towards you: Yea, I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present, with the confidence wherewith I count to be bold against some which count of us as if we walked according to the flesh; Chap. 10:1, 2 and, being in readiness to avenge all disobedience when your obedience shall be fulfilled: 2 Corinthians 10:6 and, I fear lest when I come, I should find you not such as I would, and should myself be found of you such as you would not; 2 Corinthians 12:20 and again, lest when I come my God should humble me before you, and that I should mourn many of them which have sinned heretofore, and repented not of the lasciviousness and uncleanness which they committed: 2 Corinthians 12:21 and afterwards, I told you before and foretell you, as if I were present the second time, and being absent now I write, that, if I come again, I will not spare; seeing that you seek a proof of Christ, that speaks in me. Chap. 13:2, 3 Since then he had said these things and more besides, terrifying, shaming, reproaching, lashing them, he says, in excuse for all, For this cause I write these things while absent, that I may not when present deal sharply. For I am

desirous the sharpness should lie in my letters and not in my deeds. I wish my threats to be vehement, that they may continue threats and never go forth into action. Again even in this his apology he makes what he says more terrible, showing that it is not himself who is to punish, but God; for he added, according to the authority which the Lord gave me; and again, to show that he desires not to use his power to their punishment, he added, not for casting down, but for building up. And he hinted indeed this now, as I said, but he left it to them to draw the conclusion that if they should continue unamended, even this again is building up, to punish those that are of such a mind. For so it is, and he knew it and showed it by his deeds.

2 Corinthians 13:11

For the rest, brethren, rejoice, be perfected, be comforted, be of the same mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

What means, for the rest, brethren, rejoice? You have pained, terrified, thrown them into an agony, made them to tremble and fear, and how do you bid them rejoice? 'Why, for this very reason I bid them rejoice. For,' he says, 'if what is your part follow' upon mine, there will be nothing to prevent that joy. For all my part has been done; I have suffered long, I have delayed, I have forborne to cut off, I have besought, I have advised, I have alarmed, I have threatened, so as by every means to gather you in unto the fruit of repentance. And now it behooves that your part be done, and so your joy will be unfading.'

Be perfected. What is, be perfected? 'Be complete, fill up what is deficient.'

Be comforted. For, since their trials were numerous, and their perils great, he says, 'be comforted, both by one another, and by us, and by your change unto the better. For if you should have joy of conscience and become complete, nothing is wanting unto your cheerfulness and comfort. For nothing does so produce comfort as a pure conscience, yea, though innumerable trials surround.'

Be of the same mind, live in peace. The request he made in the former Epistle also, at the opening. For it is possible to be of one mind, and yet not to live in peace, [for instance], when people agree in doctrine, but in their dealings with each other are at variance. But Paul requires both.

And the God of love and peace shall be with you. For truly he not only recommends and advises, but also prays. For either he prays for this, or else foretells what shall happen; or rather, both. 'For if you do these things,' he says, 'for instance, if you be of one mind and live in peace, God also will be with you, for He is the God of love and of peace, and in these things He delights, He rejoices. Hence shall peace also be yours from His love; hence shall every evil be removed. This saved the world, this ended the long war, this blended together heaven and earth, this made men angels. This then let us also imitate, for love is the mother of countless good things. By this we were saved, by this all those unspeakable good things [come] to us.'

2. Then to lead them on unto it, he says,

2 Corinthians 13:12

Salute one another with a holy kiss.

What is holy? not hollow, not treacherous, like the kiss which Judas gave to Christ. For therefore is the kiss given, that it may be fuel unto love, that it may kindle the disposition, that we may so love each other,

as brothers brothers, as children parents, as parents children; yea, rather even far more. For those things are a disposition implanted by nature, but these by spiritual grace. Thus our souls bound unto each other. And therefore when we return after an absence we kiss each other, our souls hastening unto mutual intercourse. For this is that member which most of all declares to us the workings of the soul. But about this holy kiss somewhat else may yet be said. To what effect? We are the temple of Christ; we kiss then the porch and entrance of the temple when we kiss each other. See ye not how many kiss even the porch of this temple, some stooping down, others grasping it with their hand, and putting their hand to their mouth. And through these gates and doors Christ both had entered into us, and does enter, whenever we communicate. You who partake of the mysteries understand what I say. For it is in no common manner that our lips are honored, when they receive the Lord's Body. It is for this reason chiefly that we here kiss. Let them give ear who speak filthy things, who utter railing, and let them shudder to think what that mouth is they dishonor; let those give ear who kiss obscenely. Hear what things God has proclaimed by your mouth, and keep it undefiled. He has discoursed of the life to come, of the resurrection, of immortality, that death is not death, of those other innumerable mysteries. For he that is about to be initiated comes to the priest's mouth as it were an oracle, to hear things full of awe. For he lost his life even from his forefathers, and comes to seek it again, and to ask how he may haply find and get it back. Then God announces to him how it may be found, and that mouth becomes more awful than the very mercy-seat. For that mercy-seat never sent forth a voice like this, but spoke much of lesser things, of wars and such peace as is here below: but this speaks all about heaven and the life to come, and things new and that pass understanding. And having said,

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Salute one another with an holy kiss, he added, All the saints salute you.

By this also giving them good hopes. He has added this in the place of the kiss, knitting them together by the salutation, for the words also proceed from the same mouth from which the kiss. Do you see how he brings them all together, both those who are widely separated in the body and those who are near, these by the kiss and those by the written message?

2 Corinthians 13:14

3. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the Father, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. After having united them to one other by the salutations and the kisses, he again closes his speech with prayer, with much carefulness uniting them unto God also. Where now are they who say that because the Holy Spirit is not inserted in the beginnings of the Epistles, He is not of the same substance? For, behold, he has now enumerated Him with the Father and Son.

And besides this, one may remark, that when writing to the Colossians and saying, Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, he was silent of the Son, and added not, as in all his Epistles, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Is then the Son not of the same substance either, because of this? Nay, these reasonings are of extreme folly. For this very thing especially shows Him to be of the same substance, that Paul uses the expression [or not] indifferently. And that what is here said is no conjecture, hear how he mentions Son and Spirit, and is quite silent of the Father.

For, writing to the Corinthians, he says, But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God. 1 Corinthians 6:11 What then, tell me? Were these not baptized into the Father? Then assuredly they were neither washed nor

sanctified. But did they baptize them? Doubtless then just as also they did baptize. How then did he not say, 'You are washed in the name of the Father.' Because it was indifferent in his view, at one time to make mention of this, at another of that Person; and you may observe this custom in many places of the Epistles.

For writing to the Romans he says, I beseech you therefore by the mercies of God, Romans 12:1 although those mercies are of the Son; and, I beseech you by the love of the Spirit, Romans 15:30 although love is of the Father. Wherefore then mentioned he not the Son in the mercies, nor the Father in the love? Because as being things plain and admitted, he was silent about them. Moreover, he will be found again, to put the gifts also themselves transposedly. For having said here, The grace of Christ, and the love of God and the Father, and the communion of the Holy Ghost; he in another place speaks of the communion of the Son, and of the love of the Spirit.

For, I beseech you, he says, by the love of the Spirit. Romans 15:30 And in his Epistle to the Corinthians, God is faithful, by Whom you were called into the communion of His Son. 1 Corinthians 1:9 Thus the things of the Trinity are undivided: and whereas the communion is of the Spirit, it has been found of the Son; and whereas the grace is of the Son, it is also of the Father and of the Holy Spirit; for [we read], Grace be to you from God the Father. And in another place, having enumerated many forms of it, he added, But all these works the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally as He will. 1 Corinthians 12:11 And I say these things, not confounding the Persons, (away with the thought!) but knowing both the individuality and distinctness of These, and the Unity of the Substance.

4. Let us then continue both to hold these doctrines in their strictness, and to draw to us the love of God. For before indeed He loved us when hating Him, and reconciled us who were His enemies; but henceforth He wishes to love us as loving Him. Let us then continue to love Him, so that we may be also loved by Him. For if when beloved by powerful men we are formidable to all, much more when [beloved] by God. And should it be needful to give wealth, or body, or even life itself for this love, let us not grudge them.

For it is not enough to say in words that we love, but we ought to give also the proof of deeds; for neither did He show love by words only, but by deeds also. Do thou then also show this by your deeds and do those things which please Him, for so shall you yourself reap again the advantage. For He needs nothing that we have to bestow, and this is also a special proof of a sincere love, when one who needs nothing and is not in any necessity, does all for the sake of being loved by us.

Wherefore also Moses said, For what does the Lord God require of you, but to love Him, and that you should be ready to walk after Him? Deuteronomy 10:12 So that when He bids you love Him, He then most of all shows that He loves you. For nothing does so secure our salvation as to love Him. See then, how that all His commandments even tend together to our repose and salvation and good report. For when he says, Blessed are the merciful, blessed are the pure in heart, blessed are the meek, blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are the peacemakers; Matthew 5:3-9 He Himself indeed reaps no advantage from these, but he enjoins them for our adorning and attuning; and when He says, I was an hungred, it is not as needing that ministry from us, but as exciting you to humanity.

For He was well able even without you to feed the poor man; but as bestowing upon you an exceeding treasure, he laid these commands upon you. For if the sun, which is but a creature, needs not our eyes; for he abides in his own proper brightness, even though none should look upon him, and we it is who are the gainers when we enjoy his beams; much more is this so with God. But that you may learn this in yet

another way; how great will you have the distance to be between God and us?

As great as between gnats and us, or much greater? Quite plainly it is much greater, yea, infinite. If then we vainglorious creatures need not service nor honor from gnats, much rather the Divine Nature [none from us], seeing It is impassible and needing nothing. The measure of that which He enjoys by us is but the greatness of our benefit, and the delight He takes in our salvation. For this reason He also oftentimes relinquishes His own, and seeks yours. For if any, he says, have a wife that believes not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away; 1 Corinthians 7:12 and, He that puts away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causes her to commit adultery.

Do you see what unspeakable goodness? 'If a wife be a harlot,' He says, 'I do not compel the husband to live with her; and if she be an unbeliever, I do not forbid him.' Again, 'if you be grieved against any one, I command him that has grieved you to leave My gift and to run to you.' For He says, If you are offering your gift, and there remember that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift before the altar, and go your way, first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Matthew 5:23-24 And what says the parable of him that had devoured his all? Matthew 18:24, etc. Does it not show this? For when he had eaten up those ten thousand talents, He had mercy on him, and let him go; but when he demanded of his fellowservant an hundred pence, he both called him wicked and delivered him over to the punishment. So great account does He make of your ease. The barbarian was about to sin against the wife of the just man, and He says, I spared you from sinning against me.

Genesis 20:6 Paul persecuted the Apostles, and He says to him, Why do you persecute Me? Others are hungry, and He Himself says He is an hungred, and wanders about naked and a stranger, wishing to shame you, and so to force you into the way of almsgiving.

Reflecting then upon the love, how great He has shown in all things, and still shows it to be, both having vouchsafed to make Himself known to us, (which is the greatest crown of good things, and light to the understanding and instruction in virtue,) and to lay down laws for the best mode of life, and having done all things for our sakes, having given His Son, and promised a kingdom, and invited us to those unspeakable good things, and prepared for us a most blessed life, let us do and say every thing so as both to appear worthy of His love and to obtain the good things to come; whereunto may we all attain, through the grace and love towards men of our Lord Jesus Christ; with Whom to the Father, with the Holy Spirit, be glory now and ever, and world without end. Amen.

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